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13 May 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Proposed Estimate on Consequences of Soviet Policies
Designed to Promote a "Relaxation of East-West Tensions"

1. At the IAC meetings on 14 and 24 April (IAC-M-67, para. 6, and IAC-M-68, para. 1), it was agreed that an estimate on this general subject would replace NIE-45, cancelled by the IAC. The Director of Naval Intelligence undertook to prepare terms of reference for such an estimate. These were submitted to the Office of National Estimates on 5 May and are attached hereto.

2. The Board of National Estimates has considered the terms of reference proposed by ONI and believes that the scope of the proposed estimate can be defined somewhat more precisely, while preserving the substantive points mentioned in these terms of reference.

3. As to scope, the Board believes that:

a. The estimate should exclude effects on the US (as ONI proposes).

b. The estimate should not consider the likelihood of Soviet policies along the indicated lines, leaving that to be covered in the pending NIE-64 (II) and successor estimates on Soviet courses of action. Instead the estimate should assume

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the pursuit by the USSR of generally cautious policies, though it would consider the tactics the USSR might follow within a framework of such policies. The limits of "generally cautious" policies are extremely hard to define with precision except in terms of the result sought -- to divide and confuse the non-Communist world and to avoid arousing and uniting it in opposition to the Soviet threat. Identifiable Soviet or Satellite military aggression would be excluded. However, covert support of local Communist subversion (e.g., in Iran and Burma) would not necessarily be excluded, provided that such support could be carried on in such a way as to avoid the appearance of substantial Soviet or Soviet bloc participation, at least in the eyes of most of the non-Communist world (excluding the US). In addition, sporadic shows of force and local sabre-rattling might be used consistently with the basic purpose.

c. The assumed "generally cautious" policies would presuppose no change in ultimate Soviet aims. They would also exclude even temporary major Soviet concessions involving the acceptance of any substantial setbacks, psychological or otherwise, to the prestige of World Communism. Specifically, such actions as the acceptance of UN investigation or free elections in East Germany -- which we now estimate as unlikely -- would be excluded. The estimate would concentrate particularly on the effect of those tactics the Soviet bloc might pursue without substantial cost to itself -- e.g.:

1. "Peace" campaigns and conciliatory propaganda directed at countries other than the US. (Anti-US propaganda, such as the germ warfare campaign, would not be excluded and might indeed be an affirmative part of the over-all line of policy, the aim being to depict the US as more likely to initiate a war than the Soviet bloc.)

2. Discussion of disarmament and atomic energy control proposals.

3. Efforts to increase East-West trade in strategic and other materials.

4. Signature of an Austrian peace treaty.

5. More friendly behavior by Soviet citizens and diplomats abroad and the easing of access to and travel within the Soviet bloc (again perhaps excluding US representatives.)

6. Popular front tactics and the avoidance of extreme violence by Western European Communist parties.

7. The release of prisoners such as William Oatis.

d. In order to indicate the above limitation, the estimate would not use the phrase "relaxation of tensions," which might be taken to imply a basic Soviet shift in aim or major concessions. Instead the assumed policies should be defined as

"designed primarily to weaken Western unity and resolution."

e. The estimate should focus on the prospective future attitude and policies of the non-Communist world, and should consider past and present attitudes only to the extent required to shed light on, and provide a basis for, an estimate of future trends under the impact of the assumed Soviet policies.

f. The estimate should concentrate on policies toward the East-West conflict, including specifically the respects listed in the ONI terms of reference.

g. The estimate should run to mid-1954, since one of the purposes of the estimate would be to provide guidance for NSC planning of US budget programs for fiscal 1954.

h. The estimate should consider all countries outside the Soviet bloc, and within each country the position not only of likely governments but also of principal opposition parties and leading groups. (This is done in the ONI terms of reference.)

4. As to timing, the Board believes that the proposed estimate should be completed in time to be of use in NSC deliberations on the FY 1954 budget, which begin in September 1952. The Board believes that the estimate could be initiated prior to completion of NIE-64, the pending basic Soviet paper, but should be brought to completion thereafter. The Board therefore proposes a target date of 1 September 1952.

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5. If the above suggestions for scope and timing are approved by the members of the IAC, the Board proposes to prepare and circulate revised terms of reference based on the ONI draft for early consideration by the IAC representatives.

RECOMMENDATION

That the members of the IAC concur, by telephonic notice prior to the close of business on _____, in the initiation of an estimate along the above lines, to be entitled:

NIE : PROBABLE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD TOWARD THE EAST-WEST CONFLICT, ASSUMING SOVIET BLOC POLICIES DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO WEAKEN WESTERN UNITY AND RESOLUTION.